

Philippians 3:1-14 Part 1

1. Finally, rejoice in the Lord – vs. 1a – Again Paul is challenging the church here to be “of good cheer” and rejoice even though Paul was chastising them.
2. I write the same things again – vs. 1b - Paul makes a point of telling them he doesn’t mind repeating his admonition and calling to their attention the things that needed correction.
3. It is for your own good – vs. 1c – How many times have we heard that phrase; “It’s for your own good?” Man growing up I heard it a lot. But it really was for my good; I just didn’t realize it at the time. Paul understood that. So he was willing to repeat it things over and over again.
4. Beware – vs. 2a – This word was used in the most emphatic way possible. Paul is warning the church to “be on guard”, “be watchful”, “be careful”, “be cautious”, “be on the look-out”, or to “protect from” something. He knew that there were many false teachers, preacher, and prophets that would manipulate the truth and influence them with their teaching. Paul wanted the church to not just blindly believe what they were saying. Today it is no different. We must be aware of the probability and possibility that the “church” has people in it who are out for their own gain.
5. The dogs – vs. 2b – Who are we to be aware of? Paul doesn’t mean real dogs as in the animal. He means the scum that would deceive you and me and try to manipulate us into believing their own doctrine of the truth for their own profit. The word “dog” is used throughout scripture to describe the Gentile nation or those who do not accept Christ as the Son of God.
6. The evil workers – vs. 2c – Here Paul includes another description of those false people, those who would do evil. These are people who just have a mean streak. Those who enjoy watching others struggle, fall, and live confused lives. It is about control for them. They will do anything and say anything to have that control over you. Truth is not the goal for them.
7. False circumcision – vs. 2d – In the Old Testament, the Jewish nation was set apart by God and the physical outward sign was the circumcision of all male children on the 8th day. This was to distinguish the Jew as God’s chosen people. However, God speaks about the church being circumcised from the world by being in the world but not of the world. The converted Gentile was “circumcised” from the world he knew by the salvation of Christ. Yet Paul tells us that we are to be on the lookout for those who would preach a gospel that has some truth by not all truth. The best lie is one that is mostly true. You will hear all kinds of things in school that sound really good and believable, but it is false. You need to “beware” that not everyone is on your side and wants you to understand the truth of scripture.

8. True circumcision – vs. 3a – Paul never tells you something is not true without telling you what is true. So here he describes for us “true circumcision”. While it is not the physical circumcision that he is referring to, it is spiritual circumcision. You see, God didn’t need to impose the physical anymore because Christ died and paid that penalty for all mankind. So gentiles as well as Jews could be saved.
9. Put no confidence in the flesh – vs. 3b – Throughout all of Paul’s ministry he warns against using the “flesh” to make spiritual decisions. We simply cannot rely on our flesh or natural desires, wants, and worldly knowledge to determine God’s purpose in our lives. We can only make spiritual decisions with spiritual help. So when we are trying to figure all this stuff out about life, we can’t rely on the “natural man.” We must use our spiritual knowledge. We can only increase that by prayer and study.
10. If anyone can, I can – vs. 4 – 6 – Now Paul just said that we were not supposed to put our confidence in the flesh, which to him meant that we are not to put our trust in the fact we were born into a particular family, social status, schooling, or political position. In fact, he says if anyone has the right or credentials to do that, he did. He tells the church all that makes him the perfect candidate for that. He was all that the church standards required to be a Jew and fulfill the Jewish law, but Paul knew it took more than that to make him a Christian and a follower of Christ.
11. I have counted it all loss – vs. 7 – It is interesting to me that everything Paul just listed that would make him acceptable to the leadership of the current day church he now says he looks at it as nothing and now see it as loss. Remember, Paul was a Christian killer and persecutor of the greatest kind and the church at that time was grateful for him trying to eradicate the early Christian church. That is because the early church took the power out of the hands of the church and put it into the individual through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
12. Surpassing value – vs. 8a – Here we see why Paul counted all things as loss. He understood that compared to knowing Christ, everything else falls short in value and importance. Our lives should reflect the fact that Jesus is worth following because of who He is and just because the Bible tells us to. We need to get the truth of the knowledge of who Christ is from our heads into our hearts. That is a challenge in this world of pseudo-intellectualism.
13. Suffered loss – vs. 8b – We need to understand and be prepared for, and willing to suffer loss for the sake of Christ. Paul knew what it was like. So will we if we are willing to be true Christ followers. It may not be to lose everything, but it will mean that we need to be willing to lose something, and usually something of value to us. But as Paul says compared to the value of

knowing Christ, it really is nothing.

14. Counts them as rubbish – vs. 8c – the problem with most of us is that if we so start to go down the road of suffering with Christ, we don't stay on it, because we really don't make the mind set shift to really believe that all things on this earth that are seen as good is really rubbish compared to the relationship with Christ. It is a continuous deliberate choice that we must make everyday to look at our decisions.